



# Orthodox Christian PRISON MINISTRY

**Sunday July 26, 2020**

**Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday 2020**

*“Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who suffer evil, as though you yourself were suffering.” (Hebrews 13:3)*

*To the Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Pious Faithful of our Holy Orthodox Church in the United States:*

**Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

Greetings and blessings to you all!

We are blessed to observe the Sunday before the feast of St. Silas, the patron saint of prison ministry, as Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday. This year we remember this sacred ministry on July 26, 2020.

Over the last several months, our communities have suffered from isolation and division as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and now, the backlash of the tragic racial injustices in our society. With so many people suffering from anxiety, separation, depression, and anger, how will the Lord answer our prayers for peace and harmony? Usually, as men and women living in the world, we can most readily find the Lord’s answer in small, personal acts of love and mercy.

He tells us very clearly how we are expected to treat and heal one another in Matthew 25:

*“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”*

This mandate, like so much of the scripture, instructs us to proactively serve those in our community in love. Each of us can be the solution to the anxiety around us by doing the little things that are in our control with humility, empathy, and patience.

Part of this calling to serve includes those who are in prison, where true, deep isolation has enveloped our brothers and sisters incarcerated. In prison, the simple acts of kindness are magnified: a letter to someone serving a long sentence, a Bible Study in the local jail, making the wife of a prisoner feel welcome in church. These are the acts of proactive mercy our Lord calls us to that Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry and many of our clergy and parishes participate in every day.

As the Episcopal Liaison to Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry, I respectfully request you observe this day of awareness. The Holy Orthodox Church, through Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry,

brings the mercy, forgiveness, and love of Christ to those people who need hope and healing living in the darkness of prison.

As Saint John of Kronstadt states, “the very essence of the person is the image of God, and this remains in him despite every disfigurement.” Please remember and help our brothers and sisters in jails and prisons across the United States on July 26th. We humbly ask that after passing a tray for the ongoing work of your parish, you please pass a second tray on Prison Ministry Awareness Sunday for the work of the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry.

With much love and thanks in our risen Lord,

†Archbishop Mark

Episcopal Liaison, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry

P.O. Box 1597 | New York, NY, 10025

[www.theOCPM.org](http://www.theOCPM.org) | [info@theocpm.org](mailto:info@theocpm.org) | (347) 868-6957